

## CAPITAL NOTES.

Bertie, the lamb, says: "We fellows at the club, we pretend we are devils of fellows, but we ain't." The soberly-clad young women we meet on the streets daily, the Lenten season showing in all their get-up, the long lashes of their downcast eyes washing their pink cheeks, their little gloved hands holding beautifully bound prayer books, pretend they are very devout—but they "ain't." The fact is women are born actresses, and like to try the effect of their different characters on men. During Lent the temptation to lay aside earthly things and observe the effect of spirituality on Alphonse is too irresistible to be put away. These demure little creatures are very fascinating, and Cupid has a busy time of it during the forty days' devoted to fasting. This naughty elf hides between the covers of hymnals, makes a nest for himself in the corners of the very pews, and many a flirtation has been commenced between responses when both participants were kneeling. Nothing is more entertaining than to sit behind a pretty woman occupied with her devotions, to note the exquisite curves of her figure as she bends her shapely head devoutly on her pretty hands, and if a side view of the face is caught, with its earnest expression and the lovely lips making responses, Cupid's work is done and another conquest made. Sometimes the flirtation thus begun lasts only until the end of Lent, but it often ends in a wedding, and the married life that follows is, I fancy, never the less happy because of the innocent masquerading which preceded it.

But the demure little maidens, who sit with heads bowed at the end of the pew, are not the only people in church who "are not what they seem." Madame, there in the middle of the pew, half way down on the right-hand side of the aisle, the children on either side of her and their little governess at the end of pew, notwithstanding the melancholy and wrapt expression of her countenance, is not hearing a word of the service. She is a busy woman, and week days are given over to shopping and society. With the true economy of a good housewife she devotes the Sunday service to making plans for the management of her house and children. One of the baby's daintiest costumes was planned during the reading of the Litany with her head devoutly bowed, and the charming dinner she gave foreign ministers on Friday was the result of busy thinking during an unusually long sermon. But this habit of combining home and religious duties sometimes puts her in embarrassing positions. On her last reception day, when her clergyman came in for a cup of tea and fifteen minutes' chat, she said: "Oh! Mr. —, I want to thank you for your sermon last Sunday." Mr. — wore a peculiar expression as he said: "My dear Mrs. —, I am very much gratified that last Sunday's sermon gave you comfort. The Rev. Mr. —, from —ville, is a very eloquent and earnest man, and I felt more than pleased when he consented to fill my pulpit for me while I was absent in New York performing the last sad offices for an old friend." Mrs. — was for a moment abashed, but only for a moment, then she said: "I was speaking of Sunday before last. I remember now it was Sunday before last that your eloquent sermon appealed so strongly to me." "Yes, Sunday before last young Mr. —, from Boston, preached. The sermon seemed to me an especially good one. Mr. — is a man full of promise—full of promise, and I predict for him a brilliant future." Madame attempted no further explanations, but gave her spiritual adviser a cup of tea.

The silver-headed old man who sits close up in front on the right-hand side of the main aisle in one of our many churches is a constant attendant at morning service on Sunday, not only during Lent, but all the year round, when he is in town. When he was a young man he was stupid, uninteresting, had no temptations to sow his wild oats, the only talent he possessed that of money-making. His quiet behavior gained him a reputation for piety which helped him in his business. He was quick to see the advantage of being considered a religious man, and to all outward appearances became one. He never misses a Sunday, and sits during the entire service with a most devout expression on his face, but he hears nothing. He reviews his financial affairs, conceives new projects, and and fingers in imagination his stocks and bonds. His mind, through constant habit, never works as well as when he is in his own pew and the agreeable voice of his pastor resounds through the edifice. He gives liberally to the Church, for he believes that to his constant attendance there he owes his fortune. The Church is not entirely composed of make-believes, but the sincere, earnest members do not need to be written about. It is only those who pretend a devotion they do not feel who should be held up to ridicule.

On Friday I went to a dinner where one of the guests was a Roman Catholic. She ate her her clams with a relish, and had nearly finished her soup, when she dropped her spoon in alarm. "Oh! Mrs. —," said she, "it is Friday, and see I have nearly eaten my soup." "What kind of soup is it?" "Mock turtle," answered the hostess. "Mock turtle? Oh! that is all right, then, for turtle is a fish."

One day last week I spent a morning in the Corcoran Art Gallery, and beside visiting my favorite pictures had much amusement in watching the people who came and went. It is in the public buildings that one realizes how many strangers visit the Capital. On the day I was at the Gallery it was filled with travelers, who were doing the city. Some of them would step into the main picture gallery, give one glance around, and then, their artistic curiosity being satisfied, they would go down stairs again. Others would make the round of the pictures, and some of their comments were very amusing. The "Lost Dogs" was the favorite picture of the multitude, and I was much interested in their comments. "Hear 'em moanin' and groanin'," said a seedy-looking old man. "They're jes' as natural as life, ain't they? An' it makes one sort o' sad like to look at 'em." "Oh, mamma!" said a young creature in a red bonnet, "do come and look at these dogs; they are just too cute for anything." A major general of a woman done up in a brown shawl allowed as how "them dogs" made a mighty nice picture, but her Annie at home

could paint prettier dogs "than them all." I cannot remember half the funny things that were said about Von Thoren's picture. Almost as many were inspired by "The Vestal Tuccia," which hangs near it. As few of the visitors at the Gallery had invested in a catalogue, they were, of course, in the dark as to the story of this exquisite picture, and various were the conjectures as to what the woman on the banks of the Tiber was doing. One suggested that fish might be in the pan she held above her head, another said, but all "allowed" that the picture was pretty, whatever it meant. Power's masterpiece and Detaille's "Le Regiment qui Passe" received but little attention, while nearly every one stopped before Renouf's "The Helping Hand." Most of the people hardly looked at the pictures as they hurried through, and they were evidently making the tour of the Gallery as a duty. I learned before going away that my fellow-visitors were excursionists from some Northern city, who were doing the Capital. I should like to have heard their criticisms on the pictures in the Art Gallery when they talked them over with the "home folks."

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